REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action of April 5, 2006. Claims 72-87 are pending in the application. Claims 72 and 81 are amended and Claims 88-99 are added by this Response. No new matter is added by the present amendments. A Request for Continued Examination is submitted herewith. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due and owing.

Interview of June 15, 2006

Applicant thanks Examiner Pesin for granting a telephonic interview to Applicant's representative, MacLane C. Key, on June 15, 2006. Applicant agreed with Examiner Pesin that "electronic system" is a broader term than "first user's computer" and explained that the cited references did not teach a single electronic system from which an agent parameter is sent, in which a state of the agent is set to an absent state in response to sending the agent parameter, and in which the behavior of the agent is modified in accordance with the state. Examiner Pesin agreed and indicated that the claims as amended by this Response would overcome the present rejections.

Rejections

The Office Action rejected Claims 72-87 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,219,045 to Leahy, et al. ("Leahy") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,793,365 to Tang, et al. ("Tang"). Applicants respectfully disagree with and traverse this rejection.

Claim 72 is directed to a method of controlling an agent. The method includes sending an agent parameter from an electronic system, wherein the agent parameter defines a behavior of an agent. The method also includes setting a state of the agent in the electronic system to absent state in response to sending the agent parameter and generating the agent parameter if the agent parameter is not returned within a predetermined time period. The method also includes modifying the behavior of the agent in the electronic system in accordance with the state in the electronic system.

Leahy discloses a three-dimensional graphical, multi-user, interactive virtual world system. A plurality of users can interact in the three-dimensional, computer-generated graphical space where each user executes a client process to view a virtual world from the perspective of that user. The virtual world shows avatars representing the other users who are neighbors of the

user viewing the virtual world. In order that the view can be updated to reflect the motion of the remote user's avatars, motion information is transmitted to a central server which provides position updates to client processes for neighbors of the user at that client process. The client process also uses an environment database to determine which background objects to render as well as to limit the movement of the user's avatar.

However, as admitted by the Office Action, Leahy does not disclose or suggest setting a state of an agent in an electronic system to an absent state in response to sending the agent parameter from the electronic system as described in Claim 72. Instead, the Office Action relies upon Tang to teach setting the state of an agent to an absent state.

Tang discloses a system which provides each networked computer user with a user interface displaying visual representations of selected other computer users, generally of those workers in the user's workgroup. The system also provides communication mechanisms for contacting any of the displayed workers. The visual representations of the other users are frequently updated to indicate the activity level of these users. These activity level cues help users predict if the other users are likely to be available for an interaction. The system enables an icon associated with a user to be changed manually or automatically in the display of other users to reflect that user's absence.

However, it is respectfully submitted that even if the Office Action interprets displaying an absent icon on a second user's computer when a first user manually or automatically indicates he or she is absent as setting a state of an agent to an absent state on the second user's computer in response to sending an agent parameter from the first user's computer, Tang would still not teach setting a state of an agent in an electronic system to an absent state in response to sending the agent parameter from the electronic system. The state is not being set in the electronic system from which it is sent. Tang does not teach or suggest setting the state of an agent to absent in the first user's computer in response to sending an agent parameter from the first user's computer. Further, if the system including both the first and second user's computers were interpreted to be the electronic system, it is respectfully submitted that the agent parameter could no longer be interpreted to be sent from the electronic system. Instead, the agent parameter would only be sent within the electronic system. In Claim 72, the a state of the agent in an

electronic system is set to an absent state in response to sending the agent parameter from that electronic system.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that neither Leahy nor Tang teach modifying the behavior of the agent in the electronic system in accordance with the state. Leahy describes a user viewing a virtual world from his or her computer and moving through the virtual world; however, Leahy does not describe modifying the behavior of an agent in the electronic system in accordance with a state, which can be an absent state, and that an agent parameter of the agent is sent from that electronic system. Leahy only describes modifying the behavior of avatars which are present in the virtual world; not absent. Even if Leahy were to teach modifying what a user views when another user in the same room exits the virtual world (which it doesn't), it is respectfully submitted that it would still not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the behavior of a user's avatar (which isn't displayed to the user) on the user's computer when the user sends a logoff message.

Similarly, Tang describes changing icons on other users' displays to indicate a first user is absent. However, it is respectfully submitted that no agent parameter related to those icons of the first user (displayed on the other users' computers) is sent from the other users' computers. Further, Tang does not teach or suggest displaying the icons associated with the first user on the first user's computer, so, consequently, Tang does not teach or suggest modifying the behavior of the first user's icons on the first user's computer. Further still, if the system including the first user's computer and the other users' computers were interpreted to be the electronic system, it is respectfully submitted that the agent parameter could no longer be interpreted to be sent from the electronic system. Instead, the agent parameter would only be sent within the electronic system.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 72 and Claims 73-80 and 88-93, which depend from Claim 72, are patentably distinguished over Leahy in view of Tang and are in condition for allowance. For similar reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 81 and Claims 82-87 and 94-99, which depend from Claim 81, are patentably distinguished over Leahy in view of Tang and are in condition for allowance.

Additionally, with respect to Claim 76, neither Leahy nor Tang teach or suggest detecting one or more events corresponding to said agent when the state is absent state in said electronic system. The Office Action relies upon Leahy to teach detecting one or more events

corresponding to said agent; however, Leahy only describes moving an avatar through a virtual environment while the avatar is present in the environment. Thus, Leahy does not teach or suggest detecting one or more events corresponding to said agent when the state of the agent is the absent state. Similarly, Tang does not teach or suggest detecting one or more events corresponding to said agent when the state of the agent is the absent state.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 76 is patentably distinguished over Leahy in view of Tang and is in condition for allowance. For similar reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 83 is patentably distinguished over Leahy in view of Tang and is in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BY _____
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Dated: June 29, 2006